

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. - 9. (previously canceled)

10. (currently amended) A method of using an actual trading system operated by a system operator to potentially provide an award to a plurality of participants operating a simulated trading system on a computing platform, the method comprising:

using the simulated trading system to

setting up an account representing a predefined portfolio of nonzero value for each of a plurality of participants, each of the accounts having no actual monetary value;

simulating trades by the plurality of participants;

applying the simulated trades to the portfolios of the trader participants to thereby update the representative value of the predefined portfolio;

awarding each participant an item of value in an amount having a monetary value that is a function of their respective portfolio's performance over an investment period; and

based upon information about the simulated trades made by the plurality of participants, using the actual trading system to

executing actual trades that each have a monetary consequence by the system operator, if needed, in order to thereby earn money to provide the items of value.

11. (previously presented) A method in accordance with claim 10, wherein the item of value is an amount awarded at the end of the investment period that is equal to all of any representative net profits the participant simulated during the investment period.

12. (previously presented) A method in accordance with claim 11, wherein the item of value is an amount awarded at the end of the investment period that is equal to all of any

representative net profits the participant simulated during the investment period up to a predetermined maximum award.

13. (previously presented) The method of claim 10, wherein the item of value is an amount awarded at the end of the investment period that is a percentage of less than 100% of any representative net profits the participant simulated during the investment period.

14. (previously presented) The method of claim 10, further comprising a step of offsetting risk to a system operator by one or more of sponsorships, advertising and participant fees.

15. (previously presented) The method of claim 10, wherein the actual trades by the system operator are at least partly based upon the simulated trades of the participants.

16. (previously presented) The method of claim 10, wherein the actual trades by the system operator are entirely based upon the simulated trades of the participants.

17. (previously presented) The method of claim 10, wherein the actual trades by the system operator are at least partly different than the simulated trades of the participants.

18. (previously presented) The method of claim 10, wherein the actual trades by the system operator are entirely different than the simulated trades of the participants.